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Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 4119th meeting of the Security Council, held on 23 March 2000 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Maintenance of peace and security and post-conflict peace-building", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council recalls the statement of its President of 8 July 1999 (S/PRST/1999/21) and welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the Role of United Nations Peacekeeping in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of 11 February 2000 (S/2000/101). The Council recalls its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and reaffirms its commitment to the principles of the political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States in conducting all peacekeeping and peace-building activities and the need for States to comply with their obligations under international law.

"The Security Council has considered the matter of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment as part of its overall and continuing effort to contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping and peace-building activities in conflict situations around the world.

"The Security Council underlines that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants are mutually supportive and that the success of the process is dependent on the success of each of its steps. The Council stresses that the political commitment of the parties involved in a peace process is a precondition for the success of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. The Council reaffirms that disarmament and demobilization must take place in a secure and safe environment, which will give ex-combatants the confidence to lay down their arms, and underlines the importance of international assistance for long-term economic and social development to facilitate successful reintegration. In this regard, the Council notes that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration must be addressed comprehensively so as to facilitate a smooth transition from peacekeeping to peace-building.

"The Security Council recognizes that the mandates of peacekeeping missions increasingly include oversight of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration as one of their functions. The Council further recognizes the importance of incorporating, as appropriate, within specific peace agreements,

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with the consent of the parties, and on a case-by-case basis within United Nations peacekeeping mandates, clear terms for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, including the safe and timely collection and disposal of arms and ammunition. The Council emphasizes that the international community's advocacy is essential in this regard. The Council also underlines the necessity of a clear definition of tasks and division of responsibilities among all actors involved in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, including United Nations agencies and programmes, and that this should be reflected, where relevant, in the mandates of peacekeeping operations.

"The Security Council recognizes that effective action to curb the illegal flow of small arms and light weapons into areas of conflict can contribute to the success of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, and encourages further efforts and cooperation at the national, subregional, regional and global levels to this end.

"The Security Council underlines in particular the importance of disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating child soldiers, as well as taking into account the problems faced by war-affected children in mission areas. It is therefore imperative that child soldiers be fully included in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, and that programmes also be designed to address the special needs of all war-affected children, taking into account differences in sex and age, and their differing experiences in the course of armed conflict, with particular attention to girls. In this regard, the Council requests the Secretary-General to consult relevant United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Children's Fund, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and other relevant organizations with expertise in the field with a view to the development of appropriate programmes, and underlines the importance of coordination in this regard.

"The Security Council welcomes the initiative of the Secretary-General to include within all peacekeeping operations personnel with appropriate training in international, humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, including child- and gender-related provisions. In this regard, the Council welcomes the inclusion of a child protection adviser in some of the recent peacekeeping operations, and encourages the Secretary-General to include such personnel in future operations as appropriate. The Council stresses the importance of addressing, in particular, the needs of women ex-combatants, notes the role of women in conflict resolution and peace-building and requests the Secretary-General to take that into account.

"The Security Council recognizes that adequate and timely funding for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration is critical to the successful implementation of a peace process, and calls for coordination of voluntary and assessed funding to that end, including among all elements of the United Nations system. The Council welcomes the increasing involvement of the World Bank in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes and stresses the importance of support of Member States for its activities in this area. The Council further encourages other international financial institutions to become involved.

"The Security Council stresses that training of peacekeepers in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants continues to be an important asset in the implementation of these activities in mission areas. In that regard, the Council notes that the review by the Secretary-General of lessons learned from disarmament, demobilization and reintegration experiences may assist Member States and others in their training efforts. The Council encourages the Secretary-General to explore avenues of cooperation with existing and new peacekeeping training centres in the implementation of such training programmes.

"The Security Council takes note that the ultimate success of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process may require efforts long after the withdrawal of multidisciplinary peacekeeping operations. In this regard, the post-conflict United Nations presence, including the deployment, as appropriate, of a follow-on mission, may help support the advances made and further make progress on the matter.

"The Security Council encourages the Secretary-General to continue to address this issue on a regular basis and to draw to its attention any new developments in this area.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter."